

Story 1818 (1970 Tape 16) Narrator: Ayfer Uysal, child

Location: Karaağaç village,
Karacabey kaza,
Bursa Province

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Workers Idled by Wednesday Witches¹

A very long time ago, when my father was just a boy--maybe fifty years ago--there were some fierce women, somewhat like witches. They were known as the "Wednesday Women." Because of them many people did no work anytime during Wednesday or Wednesday evening. They were afraid to violate the women's rule against work on that day. But occasionally there were people who either paid no attention to these women's restriction on work or they forgot about it.

There was a family that started working at various tasks in their home one Wednesday. Some began spinning wool. Others started making popcorn. But they had no sooner started this work than there came a knock on the door. When someone opened the door, a Wednesday Witch

¹Up to this point in ATON, all tales containing "Wednesday Witches" have presented these beings as elfin creatures, fairies. There are always two people who become involved with them in some way. The first person is kind, cooperative, and cordial toward them and, as a result, is rewarded for his good-naturedness. The second is cross, uncooperative, and offensive in some way, and, as a result, is punished.

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entered the house. She said to the spinsters, "So, you are working--ha?" She said to the others, "So, you are working too--ha?" Then after a moment, she said, "So, are spinning wool--ha? So, you are popping corn--ha?" Then, after combing her hair down over her forehead, sat in a corner and glared at them. Everyone was frightened and stopped whatever work he or she was doing.

After the residents of that house had stopped working, the Wednesday Witch went to the kitchen, and there she threw away the spoons that were in the utensil holder. She then climbed upon the cookstove and began urinating, patır, patır, patır. This soon put out the fire in the stove. The members of the family forgot their fear of her then and they tried to catch her. They might even have killed her if they had caught her, but they were unable to catch her. She escaped

In the old days there was very little work done on Wednesdays. Today, however, that custom no longer exists. People work as much on Wednesday as they do on any other day.